

Mortensen J, Hazel S.

[Lending bureaucracy voice: negotiating English in institutional encounters.](#)

In: Filppula, M; Klemola, J; Mauranen, A; Vetchinnikova, S, ed. *Changing English: Global and Local Perspectives*. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter Mouton, 2017, pp.255–276.

Copyright:

© 2017 Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin/Boston

DOI link to article:

<https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110429657-014>

Date deposited:

12/10/2017

Embargo release date:

10 October 2018

Lending bureaucracy voice: Negotiating English in institutional encounters

Janus Mortensen
University of Copenhagen
jamo@hum.ku.dk

Spencer Hazel
Newcastle University
Spencer.Hazel@newcastle.ac.uk

Abstract

This chapter presents a small set of micro-analytic studies of interaction in institutional encounters at a Danish university which illustrate how English in the context of university internationalisation is habitually called upon to verbalize concepts and practices which are intimately tied to local settings but which do not necessarily have direct equivalents in English. Drawing on methods and theoretical insights originating in the conversation analytic tradition, we demonstrate how speakers negotiate expressions for local bureaucratic terms and procedures as well as their meaning, and argue that such instances of joint meaning making carry the potential to contribute to the hyper-local emergent register of English found in the setting. A key finding of the analysis is that speakers in the data are afforded different epistemic rights and obligations with relation to the lingua franca being used depending on their institutional role, (inter)national status and general familiarity with the linguistic resources used. English first language speakers are shown to be positioned as linguistic norm providers in several cases, but participants who use English as a foreign language also have a say in introducing new terms and re-defining old ones, particularly when they use English to lend bureaucracy voice in interactional roles associated with institutional power. Methodologically, the chapter makes a case for the detailed study of social interaction in transient multilingual communities as a window on linguistic and social change which may stimulate cross-fertilization between the general research areas of sociolinguistics, particularly the study of language variation and change, and the emerging body of research on the use of English in lingua franca scenarios.

Introduction

For the past 10-20 years, internationalization of Higher Education in Europe has been fuelled by a steady increase in transnational student mobility, facilitated by a widespread adoption of English as a lingua franca at universities across Europe (Fabricius, Mortensen & Haberland 2016; Jenkins 2013, Mauranen 2012, Preisler, Klitgård & Fabricius 2011). The increased traffic of transnationally mobile students and staff entails that many university programmes today constitute examples of what can be called ‘transient multilingual communities’ (Mortensen 2013), understood as social configurations of people from diverse sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds coming together (physically or otherwise) for a limited period of time around a shared activity, in this case university education.

For English to serve as a tool for communication in such contexts, it must provide the necessary means for carrying out academic as well as administrative activities associated with the local university, and English has responded readily to this challenge. Although there is a widespread and problematic tendency to ignore the use and relevance of languages other than English in the process of university

internationalization in Europe (Haberland & Mortensen 2012), it remains a truism that English, for better and for worse, has become the language that is most frequently used to lend ‘the international university’ voice.

In its role as the dominant lingua franca at internationalizing European universities, English is habitually called upon to verbalize concepts and practices which are intimately tied to local settings, but which do not necessarily have direct equivalents in English. In the present chapter we introduce a small set of micro-analytic studies of interaction in institutional encounters at a Danish university to illustrate how this process can be studied and conceptualised as a window on linguistic and social change. We demonstrate how speakers negotiate expressions for local bureaucratic terms and procedures as well as their meaning, and argue that these instances of joint meaning making carry the potential to contribute to the hyper-local emergent register of English found in the setting.

A key finding of our analysis is that speakers are afforded different epistemic rights and obligations with relation to the lingua franca being used. Previous research has shown how participants display sensitivity to their own and others’ relative rights to *know* about the topic of the talk or focus of activity in social interaction (Heritage & Raymond 2005; Raymond & Heritage 2006). Co-participants orient to a person’s epistemic authority, the “relative epistemic rights to describe and evaluate objects within different knowledge domains” (Heritage & Raymond 2005), depending on their relative epistemic status in relation to the matter at hand. Sacks (1984), for example, notes how members differentiate between the status of knowledge gained from direct experience and from that gained through hearsay, with members accorded primary epistemic rights to know about and narrate their own experiences. Elsewhere, Raymond and Heritage (2006) show how grandparents are oriented to as having privileged rights to evaluate their grandchildren, while Hayano (2011) describes how particular formatting components in turn-design, specifically the use of the Japanese particle *yo* in assessment sequences, display claims by speakers to greater access to knowledge about a referent. In our data, we note how (inter)national status, institutional status, and general familiarity with the language(s) and registers typically used in the setting are all aspects that may be relevant to the epistemic status of a member with regard to the situated use of English as a lingua franca. English first language speakers are shown to be positioned as linguistic norm providers in several cases, but they are not the only relevant providers in the setting. On the contrary, our analysis suggests that people in institutional power who habitually call on English to lend bureaucracy voice have a considerable say in introducing new terms and re-defining old ones, thereby contributing to the local development and change of English, and quite clearly asserting their role as proficient language users rather than language learners (Firth & Wagner 1997; Firth & Wagner 2007).

Data and method

The data for the current chapter forms part of the CALPIU storehouse located at Roskilde University. At the CALPIU research centre, researchers have taken a special interest in how the cultural and linguistic practices at international universities are being shaped on a day-to-day basis through interactions in a variety of settings. Previous studies carried out under the auspices of CALPIU include investigations into the use of English in Danish second/foreign language classrooms (Hazel & Wagner 2015; Kirkebæk 2013); epistemic stance-marking in student project group work

(Mortensen 2010); language choice and alternation in group oral examinations, in informal settings, and student project groups (Hazel & Mortensen 2012; Mortensen 2014; Nevile & Wagner 2008); displays of understanding in group tutorials (Day & Kjærbeck 2012); and multimodal resources for developing interaction in encounters between students and administrative staff (Hazel 2012), for which the data for the current study was initially collected.

In this chapter, we focus on face-to-face service encounters between students and university administrative staff where English is used as a lingua franca. The two settings featured in the data are sites where university students interact with designated members of staff on administrative and procedural issues, or concerns relating to their own well-being.

One part of the data set comes from the International Office of a Danish university where access was granted to carry out an exploratory study of the interactional practices of staff and students at the office's help desk. The help desk serves both international – or 'inbound' – students who may have inquiries or administrative tasks to perform concerning their stay at the host university, and local 'outbound' students who may for example be interested in participating in an international study exchange programme. In these encounters, staff members are either called on to personally assist with a student's request, or alternatively to provide the student with information on where they are able to obtain the desired information or support.

The other part of the data set is comprised by study guidance meetings where students have turned to the university study guidance counsellors (*studievejledere*) in order to discuss in private one or more of a range of concerns relating to their well-being, including the organisation of their studies and study trajectories, personal issues, study group dynamics and the like. The data of the counselling meetings were recorded in three sites, situated in different departments at the university. In all cases the counsellors are themselves students at the university.

The complete video-recorded data set consists of some 120 helpdesk and study-counselling encounters, which vary in length between 20 seconds and 85 minutes. The data involve 6 help desk staff members and 5 study guidance counsellors. The data were recorded from multiple angles with fixed cameras. Both first language and second/ additional language conversations are present in the larger data set, with a number of languages represented. In the present chapter, we pay detailed attention to interactional exchanges drawn from 2 study guidance session and 2 help desk encounters, all of which were primarily conducted in English.

Our analysis focuses particularly on the specific and sometimes novel ways in which English is mobilized in these settings as a resource to 'name' the world. Unlike traditional stable sociolinguistic communities where members can be expected to have substantially overlapping linguistic repertoires and shared cultural experiences, members in transient multilingual communities cannot *a priori* be expected to have the same linguistic and cultural frames of reference. We do not mean to suggest that participants in transient multilingual communities do not share frames of reference at all, nor do we imply that members in stable communities have completely overlapping frames. Still, there are significant differences of degree, and it is the importance of these differences that we explore in this chapter. Similarly, transient communities do not, unlike communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991),

typically count ‘masters’ among their members who can initiate novices into the practices, linguistic or otherwise, of the group. Indeed what we see in the data is that the meaning of particular linguistic items is often negotiated in situ, in interaction between participants.

The analysis below concerns four such negotiation sequences, where participants work together to converge on adequate terminology and mutual understanding of the administrative work being undertaken. The selected sequences were transcribed in CLAN (MacWhinney & Wagner 2010) and analysed drawing on methods and theoretical insights originating in the Conversation Analytic tradition (see Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974).

Analysis

Part 1: L1 English speakers, linguistic hybridity and epistemic authority

Participants in our data often need to refer to certain procedures or particular forms of documentation as they discuss questions relating to administrative matters. In such cases, what might look like everyday terms are often imbued with very specific meanings tied to the institutional context. For example, in the context of study exchange programmes the term *learning agreement* is not a general, everyday term but a specific administrative term that refers to a particular bureaucratic artefact that requires a signature from a person who holds a particular institutional position in order to be valid.

Since they are firmly embedded in the local institutional culture, the terms used to describe such administrative documents and processes have typically been coined in Danish, and students and members of staff may therefore occasionally struggle to locate adequate equivalents in English. An example of this is represented in Example 1 below. On this occasion, an East-Asian student, Sally (SAL), who speaks English as a second language and a study guidance counsellor from an English speaking country, Tod (TOD), are discussing ‘SU’, which is an acronym used to refer to the monthly allowance (*Statens Uddannelsessstøtte*, literally State Education Support) awarded to Danish national students by the state.

Example 1: Locating an equivalent in English for Danish administrative term

61 TOD: I think then you'll have to wr- write to the
62 excha- erm excha- xx
63 (0.8)
64 TOD: yeah exchange
65 (0.3)
66 SAL: by the way≈
67 TOD: ≈ office≈
68 SAL: ≈ erm now erm I can't get SU
69 æp- eræ now erm I er (0.2)
70 what is er opholdstillad- (0.3)
71 op[holdstillad- l
72 TOD: le|r er resident (0.2) permit≈
73 SAL: resident perm- residence permit (0.4)
74 so it means that I have the same
75 (0.2)
76 SAL: rights as a danish er student (.) right

In line 66, Sally initiates a new topic, eventually introducing the term '*SU*' in line 68. The term is not given any further gloss here, and does not appear to cause the counsellor any trouble, and Sally proceeds to start formulating a question relating to access of non-Danish students to financial support. However, she immediately projects upcoming trouble in line 69, where she produces a number of intra-turn hesitation markers and a pause, before suspending the progression of the turn to produce an insertion sequence, where she can attend to trouble in locating a particular term. The term in question appears to be the Danish word '*opholdstilladelse*', which is the full form of what is here produced in truncated shape as '*opholdstillad-*'. Tod treats Sally's contribution as a request for the translation of the Danish term into English (line 72), and this is ratified by Sally in next position (line 73): he offers a candidate term '*resident permit*', and she accepts the action performed by Tod, that of suggesting a candidate translation of the term in English. This is a qualified acceptance, however, as she suspends the repetition of the term '*resident permit*' to produce the more 'formally correct' version '*residence permit*'.

In this case, the participants are successful in identifying a relevant pre-existing term in English, *residence permit*, to name the Danish bureaucratic term in question. What is notable is that both student and counsellor, neither of whom is Danish, deploy Danish terms to serve as tools to advance their conversation. This indexes the talk's embeddedness in the local, Danish context, and constructs and reflects the status of the English used in this setting as a hybrid localised register that draws on features associated with multiple 'languages', not simply 'English'.

Furthermore, the sequence demonstrates the presence of a number of shared understandings between the participants. First, there is an understanding that the staff representative should be able to understand Danish, at least with regard to terminology relevant to the topics that these meetings may encompass: Sally orients to Tod as a person able to understand the Danish administrative terms she slots into her talk. This indicates that the use of English in this setting to some extent presupposes a multilingual backdrop which is particular to that setting. We might say that the participants implicitly acknowledge the hybrid nature of the 'language scenario' (Mortensen 2013: 36) that their interaction unfolds within. Second, and perhaps paradoxically considering the multilingual nature of the interaction, there is an orientation to a requirement for the procedures to be named in English, even where the participants already display their understandings of the matters as referred to in Danish. Sally and Tod both treat the term '*opholdstilladelse*' as a term that needs to be translated into English and Tod takes on the role of L1 English language expert in providing a candidate term, even when they each appear to display knowledge of what the term means in Danish. This suggests that they do not consider the use of a bilingual medium (Gafaranga and Torras 2001) appropriate for the encounter, despite its multilingual base. Finally, the participants display a concern for using terms that may be considered 'formally correct' even when what would appear to be an adequate variation has been used and oriented to as understood: it is not sufficient to use the term '*resident permit*' when the more formally accepted '*residence permit*' can be employed. This suggests that the participants here, contrary to what is often suggested to be the case in scenarios where English is used as a lingua franca (Cogo 2008; Firth 1996), orient to 'form' and not merely 'function' or communicative success. In other words, despite the fact that the language used here is remarkably local, the

participants nevertheless to some extent seem to adopt an exonormative approach in their use of English, with the L2 speaker of English being the one who displays this orientation most clearly in producing an embedded repair (Jefferson 1987) of *'resident permit'* to *'residence permit'*.

In our second example it is a student counsellor who displays difficulties in locating a relevant term in English for a particular administrative procedure, and turns to the student, who in this case is an L1 speaker of English, to confirm a candidate term. Although the sequence resembles the one described above, it is not as straightforward, and the outcome is very different. The sequence is taken from a study guidance meeting between a North-American student, Zara (ZAR), and a German student guidance counsellor, Adam (ADA). They are discussing the possibility for Zara to take a year out from her studies.

Early in the encounter, Zara positions herself as a competent speaker of Danish. This happens during a section where she argues that she would be sufficiently proficient to attend a Danish language Bachelor's programme in her subject, which she hopes to do in the future. This assessment of her Danish skills appears to make relevant an account for why the current meeting is being held in English, rather than in the local language. She provides this by a) saying that she would in principle be able to handle the encounter in Danish (lines 19 and 22 in Example 2a), and then b) going on to explain why she would nevertheless prefer English. In accounting for her preference for English, she explains that using English is important for her to achieve full understanding of the issues addressed in the meeting (lines 35-36 and 38 in Example 2a).

Example 2a: Accounting for language preference and claiming language competence

Zara – student; Adam - counsellor

- 19 ZAR: I mean I'm I'm obviously I'm good enough to handle [taking]
20 ADA: [okay]
21 so [you you you]
22 ZAR: [in in Danish]
23 ADA: you studied the international humanistic basic studies
24 ZAR: yes~
25 ADA: ~okay~
26 ZAR: ~and then while I was studying that I was learning Danish
27 (0.5)
28 ADA: yeah
29 ZAR: and then this is my first time to [do] university in Danish
30 ADA: [yeah]
31 (0.2)
32 ADA: o[kay]
33 ZAR: [this semester
34 (1.4)
35 ZAR: I just want to make sure that I understand (0.4)
36 a hundred percent of [this] conversation and not
37 ADA: [yeah]
38 ZAR: ninety [nine percent]
39 ADA: [sure sure] ha ha

Interestingly, in raising this point Zara implicitly claims epistemic authority as an English user, stating that when the conversation is conducted in English she can understand a “hundred percent of th[e] conversation and not ninety nine percent”. At

a certain point in the meeting this claimed epistemic authority is made relevant in the interaction. This happens when a particular administrative term is sought by the counsellor, who then orients to Zara and positions her as the language expert, inviting her to ratify a candidate term.

Example 2b: L1 English speaker ratifying a local English term

83 ADA: I mean what what happens is (.)
84 'you will' you will officially be (0.2) um
85 ZAR: [ʔperso-ʔ]
86 (1.3)
87 ADA: do you say ex-matriculated
88 (1.4)
89 ZAR: †yeah‡
90 ADA: yeah e[heheh] .hhh
91 ZAR: [heheh]
92 ADA: you know so um

The term in question is ‘*ex-matriculated*’, which we take to be an anglization of the German – or Danish – noun ‘*eksmatrikulation*’ or its related verbal and adjectival forms. In line 84, we note how the way this item is introduced flags up that the word may constitute a source of uncertainty on Adam’s part. Following his use of the adverb ‘officially’, and the projection of an upcoming progressive or passive verb form through the use of the auxiliary *be* (or a complement if *be* is functioning as a main verb), he breaks off, punctuating the progression with a pause and a hesitation marker. This is followed by a lengthy 1.3 second pause, upon which Adam then produces the candidate term, ‘*ex-matriculated*’. Interestingly, this candidate is embedded in a question ‘*do you say ex-matriculated*’ (line 87). Although the ‘you’ here could possibly constitute either a 2nd person or generic pronoun, it is treated here by Zara as orienting to her as the person with superior epistemic rights to be able to confirm or reject the candidate: responding to the ‘do you say’, Zara in line 89 displays an understanding that Adam has singled *her* out as the arbiter of correct English.

Zara’s response to Adam’s question is interesting. She does not respond immediately, indeed, her confirmation is very delayed.

Example 2c: L1 English speaker ratifying a local English term – refined transcript

87 ADA: do you say ex-matriculated
88 -> #(1.0)----- #(0.4)----
#Zara eyes to Adam #Zara looks over at the camera
89 ZAR: †yeah‡
#looks back to Adam; smiles
90 ADA: yeah e[heheh] .hhh
91 ZAR: [heheh]

Following a 1 second pause, Zara fixes her gaze on the video camera, which is situated on an adjacent shelf. Turning her gaze back to Adam, she then produces a somewhat hesitant confirmation ‘*yeah*’, which ends up in a smile. Adam

acknowledges the response with his own ‘yeah’, which he also follows up with a smile. Both then produce collaborative laughter.

Research has shown that participants often glance at recording equipment at moments when there is an orientation to some form of transgression of normative appropriate conduct pertaining to the on-going interaction (Speer & Hutchby 2003, Hazel 2015). This is often accompanied by the mitigating resource of laughter. If this is also the case in this example, we could consider what kind of transgression this sequence constitutes, and it is very possible that it relates particularly to the confirmation ultimately offered by Zara. This would not be altogether surprising, since the term ‘ex-matriculated’ has not, to the best of our knowledge, been ‘officially’ ratified as an L1 English term, for instance through inclusion in major dictionaries. *Matriculation* and *matriculated* are included in many such dictionaries and the construction used here clearly conforms to common morphological principles of English. Nevertheless, *ex-matriculation* has a distinct ‘local’ flavour and we suggest that this is partly what Zara displays awareness of in this sequence. She is being positioned as ‘the English expert’ and asked to ratify a word which she may in fact not know, or simply not perceive to be ‘correct’. So, on camera, she produces a little white lie in response to the question ‘do you say ex-matriculated’ and this may be said to amount to a transgression of normative appropriate conduct, however innocent it may be.

It could be suggested that the word *ex-matriculated* is a nonce item which has limited relevance beyond this encounter. However, we would argue that both parties to the encounter have now agreed that this is a legitimate lexical term, and as such, we could hypothesize that they may use it elsewhere to denote the process of de-registering from a university programme. In this way, the joint ratification of the term that takes place in this face-to-face encounter – uneventful as it may seem – could be perceived as a potentially important step in the gradual emergence of this lexical item as an accepted and commonly employed bureaucratic term which may eventually find its way into more public domains. In fact, we believe that is possible that a process like this is – or has been – taking place elsewhere in similar settings. An online search for the term ‘*ex-matriculation*’ may not provide links to established English dictionaries, but it does nevertheless throw up a number of results, all of which point to German university websites, where the anglicised equivalent of ‘*exmatrifikation*’ appears to be quite common on web pages written in English. Interestingly, there are no hits from Danish university webpages, so Adam may be seen as a first-mover here, making an aspect of his personal linguistic repertoire available for the general benefit of the transient linguistic community that he is part of.

In both of the examples we have looked at so far, we have seen that an L1 English user is ascribed superior epistemic rights to name or confirm candidate terms in English. In Example 1 we saw Tod, the student counsellor with English as his L1, provide a candidate term in English for a term initially introduced in Danish; and in the case of Example 2 we found ratification of the anglicised version of what appears to be a non-standard term (*ex-matriculated*). In the first example, it was the counsellor who was L1 English speaker, and the epistemic primacy afforded him also matched that of his institutional role; in the latter example, it was the client who was the L1 English speaker afforded epistemic primacy, at odds with the institutional role arrangement of the particular phase of the encounter, where the counsellor is at work explaining procedural aspects relating to the client’s issues.

Examples 1 and 2 thus illustrate that L1 English speakers are occasionally considered – and treated – as relevant linguistic norm providers, contrary to what have been found in other studies (e.g. Hynninen 2013). However, L1 English speakers are by no means seen as the *only* relevant norm providers in this setting. This was to some extent foreshadowed in the embedded repair that the student in Example 1 offered in relation to an uncommon noun phrase composed of entirely common individual parts (*resident permit* > *residence permit*). In this case, the epistemic authority of the L1 speaker is arguably challenged by an L2 English speaker as his candidate term is not deemed to be sufficiently in accordance with the perceived appropriate linguistic norm. However, moving beyond cases of this kind, what our data suggest is that people in institutional power who habitually call on English to lend bureaucracy voice (irrespective of their own first language) have a considerably say in introducing new terms and re-defining existing ones, thereby contributing to the local development and change of English. In the following, we turn to a number of examples where there are no L1 speakers of English present, and explore who is afforded epistemic rights to name or confirm a term that is causing one or more of the participants trouble.

Part 2: L2 English speakers, linguistic hybridity and epistemic authority

In our data, we often observe students asking for clarification of the meaning of particular terms and procedures at the interface between administrative or institutional domains and the life of the student. In such instances, the onus is on the student counsellor or help desk staff member to provide an explanation. In the following sequence, for example, we see how a particular standard administrative expression is flagged up as problematic for two students from East Asia, Suzy (SUZ) and Andy (AND). Karen (KAR), a Danish member of staff, offers assistance.

Example 3: L2 English speaker explaining the meaning of a 'standard' term

Suzy & Andy - students; Karen - help desk staff

60 KAR: so: (0.3) you have to ask the person you are staying with^h
61 if you can use that address as a cee oh (0.2) 「aaddress^h
62 SUZ: lah」
63 AND: ≈ uh huh
64 SUZ: cee oh what 「is cee oh means」
65 KAR: 「∇cee oh∇」
66 (0.5)
67 KAR: this means that you are (0.2) ∇care of∇
68 (0.5) ↓that person
69 SUZ: oh
70 KAR: okay^h
71 SUZ: okay≈
72 KAR: +≈ yeah
73 (0.3)
74 KAR: so you put your name cee oh:
75 and the name of the person
76 you are staying 「with」 and his address≈
77 SUZ: 「yeah」

In line 61, Karen introduces the term *c/o*, which Suzy immediately flags up as problematic. Karen subsequently unpacks the abbreviation, and explains that it means *care of*, an expression denoting that the address where one lives has a named primary

occupant, in whose residence you are staying or living. We note that Karen does not really *explain* the term ‘c/o’ initially: *care of* is in fact quite insufficient as an explanation to clarify what this expression denotes. However, she subsequently expands on her initial reply with an explanation as to how the term is employed in formulating your address and living circumstances.

In this case, we see that the member of staff is expected to have – and happily claims – epistemic authority to define/explain what *c/o* means. It is interesting though, that in this case, the authority is premised on a particular interactional/institutional role, not on English L1-speaker status. This suggests that the normative centres of linguistic development in this setting are not necessarily English L1 speakers. This becomes even clearer in the next example.

In part 1 of the analysis we looked at the use of the term *ex-matriculation* and argued that this could be seen as a lexical item that has emerged in response to the need for English to be able to ‘name’ the practices and concepts that exist in the local setting. In Example 4, we turn to a similar case, but now with different participants. Like the example we have just seen, Example 4 also is connected to residence permits, in this case the application form that EU citizens need to fill out when they come to Denmark to work, study or live. We will start out by looking at the application form itself, and then later return to the interaction that develops around it in a particular case in our data.

Figure 1 shows a screenshot of a section of the 7 page legal document through which non-Danish EU-citizens must apply for permission if they wish to stay longer than three months in Denmark. As the screenshot illustrates, the form is bilingual, in Danish and English. Exchange students and other transnational students tend to stay in Denmark for more than three months, so this is a form that most of them do in fact encounter. The process of filling out legal documents in order to be granted temporary permission to reside in a country may be a commonplace and perhaps even trivial matter seen from the point of view of the system, but for the individual student this nevertheless amounts to a high-stakes activity. It is essential that the information is filled out correctly by the student, who in turn is required to sign the document stating that it has been, thereby assuming legal responsibility for the veracity of the information.

Section 2 of the document is called *Oplysninger om anledningen til ansøgningen*, translated as *Information about the reason for application*. In this section, there is a box where the applicant may indicate that the purpose of the stay is *Studier/ Education*. In the same box, the document stipulates that the applicant must include two forms of documentation with the application if this box is ticked: 1. *a letter of enrolment* (*optagelsesbrev* in Danish), and 2. *a declaration of sufficient means*, which is offered as an English equivalent to the Danish term *forsørgelseserklæring*.

The image shows a screenshot of a form with two columns of text, one in Danish and one in English. The top section is titled 'Studier/ Education' and is marked with a red circle. Below this title, there is a list of required documents: 'Optagelsesbrev fra den danske uddannelsesinstitution/' and 'Forsørgelseserklæring / Declaration of sufficient means'. Both of these items are also circled in red. The bottom section is titled 'Tilstrækkelige midler / Sufficient Funds' and is also marked with a red circle. The text is bilingual, with Danish on the left and English on the right.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Studier/ Education	<input type="checkbox"/>
Følgende dokumentation bedes vedlagt ansøgningen: / Please include the following documentation with the application:	
- Optagelsesbrev fra den danske uddannelsesinstitution/ letter of enrolment from the Danish educational institution	-
- Forsørgelseserklæring / Declaration of sufficient means	-
<input type="checkbox"/> Tilstrækkelige midler / Sufficient Funds	<input type="checkbox"/>
Følgende dokumentation bedes vedlagt ansøgningen: /	

Figure 1

Declaration of sufficient means does not read like an English stock phrase, and it is most definitely not a term one would encounter in L2 English education materials. Indeed, an online search indicates that as a standalone phrase the expression is almost exclusively used in Denmark. It also appears in similar documents in The Netherlands, Germany and Slovenia, though in these contexts the term is typically embedded in a larger structure, for example *declaration of sufficient financial means*, or *declaration of sufficient means of existence*. The truncated form we find in the Danish application form is not very self-explanatory. In fact, the applicant is not given any help in ascertaining exactly what form of documentation he or she is required to provide to satisfy the requirement of enclosing a *declaration of sufficient means* with the application. It is simply unclear what is to be understood by ‘declaration’ in this context, and it is also unclear what the term ‘means’ refers to, let alone ‘sufficient means’. In sum, what an applicant needs to provide here, as part of their application for a residence permit, is somewhat opaque.

So, not surprisingly, in the following extract, taken from the help desk data set, an Italian student on the Erasmus exchange programme, Paulina (PAU), has arrived at the desk to ask for advice from Tanja (TAN) on the filling out of the application. This sequence occurs approximately 50 seconds into the meeting.

Example 4: L2 English speaker explaining the meaning of a 'non-standard' term

Tanja-staff; Paulina-client

69 PAU: and declaration of sufficient (0.2) means↗
70 (0.5)
71 PAU: what it does it means↗≈
72 TAN: ≈that you have money enough
73 to support yourself
74 while you are here
75 (0.3)
76 PAU: ah okay (.) [erm::→]
77 TAN: [a bank] statement or something like that
78 PAU: yeah↗
79 TAN: or a sti- a statement from the bank↗
80 (0.6)
81 PAU: o'kay↗
82 TAN: [or:↗] if you have (0.3) a grant↗
83 (0.8)
84 PAU: what is a grant↗
85 (0.3)
86 TAN: †stipend↗
87 (1.6)
88 PAU: n:::
89 (1.4)
90 PAU: i don::'t know what †is it↗
91 (2.3)
92 TAN: oh dear
93 (0.3)
94 TAN: .hhh it's money that you receive as a student→
95 PAU: ah: okay [perfect]
96 TAN: [to: support you→
97 (0.7)
98 PAU: okay→
99 (0.5)
100 PAU: maybe::→
101 (0.2)
102 TAN: do you hafve any funding [of that kind↗
103 PAU: [i have something]
104 (0.6)
105 PAU: yes maybe yes↘
106 (0.6)
107 PAU: o'kay
108 TAN: [okay]
109 PAU: i [think i have a palper:
110 TAN: [that's what they want]

We see that the expression in question, 'declaration of sufficient means', is problematic for Paulina¹, and she turns to a help desk officer for an explanation. In such a service provision activity, the staff member is required to take responsibility to ensure the student has an adequate level of understanding of the legal jargon that is featured in the application form, which in turn will allow the student to complete the form in the required manner. This task is complicated by the fact that the student will often have limited knowledge of the 'logic' of the administrative system, but also by the fact that the terms available in English to describe procedures and concepts that are closely tied to the local Danish context may not be available. Finally, differences in linguistic proficiency may complicate things even further.

¹ Although the phrase she is reading aloud is 'sufficient', she adds an additional 'n' making it sound like *suffincient*.

In the case at hand, the help desk officer's initial formulation appears to be geared towards unpacking the meaning of 'sufficient means', or rather of 'having sufficient means':

69 PAU: and declaration of sufficient (0.2) means↗
70 (0.5)
71 PAU: what it does it means↗≈
72 TAN: ≈that you have money enough
73 to support yourself
74 while you are here
75 (0.3)
76 PAU: ah okay (.) [erm::→]
77 TAN: [a bank] statement or something like that
78 PAU: yeah↗

So, the initial formulation relates to what the declaration needs to address, rather than what format it should take and what sort of 'evidence' would be appropriate. However, following the delayed, minimal uptake from the student in line 76, the member of staff extends her explanation with a number of suggestions as to what could satisfy the requirement. Again however, none of these suggestions (*stipend*, *grant*, *bank statement*, *statement from the bank*, being an *Erasmus student*) conforms to the format of a *declaration*. They are examples of types of documentation which may prove that a student has sufficient financial resources to undertake the exchange, but they are not in themselves 'declarations'.

Although the member of staff is neither providing an explanation of what the *declaration of sufficient means* entails, nor offering a particularly uniform set of alternative descriptors, the manner in which she responds to the student's request appears to embody some level of epistemic authority. This of course may point to the institutional nature of the encounter, where she is present as an institutionally designated person-in-the-know. The help desk encounters in our data carry an overall interactional fingerprint of asymmetrical epistemic rights and obligations, with participants working from asymmetry of knowledge to symmetrical positions (Heritage 2012). Where clients in these encounters tend to have epistemic primacy with regard to their personal affairs (whether they are an Erasmus student for example), the members of staff are deemed to possess superior knowledge of procedural matters pertaining to the institution (what goes where in filling out a document) and – very importantly for our analysis here – the language that goes with these matters. In the current sequence we observe this very pattern.

The participants start out with asymmetrical levels of understanding of the phrase in question and its relevance to the situation of this particular student, and collaboratively move towards a convergent understanding. The initial part of the sequence (lines 69-73) displays clear knowledge asymmetry, but then we observe how the participants in the subsequent steps (from line 94 onwards) gradually seem to be building mutual understanding. This process eventually leads to the participants agreeing that the requested declaration could simply be a 'paper' stating that the student is an Erasmus student (lines 108-109). This appears to amount to a pragmatically relevant understanding of what 'declaration of sufficient means' means, although as outside observers, we may still think that it is all but clear what format this paper should actually have in order to fulfil the requirement of providing 'a declaration of sufficient means'.

Nevertheless, the example shows how a phrase that is introduced as an English equivalent to a Danish administrative term denoting a particular legal requirement, may develop a certain meaning through repeated use in a particular context. The member of staff responds pragmatically to the question about what the phrase means, with an explanation of *what would satisfy the requirement*, rather than an *explanation* of the term. As the understanding of the technical term is negotiated between the participants, a particular meaning for the term may emerge, driven by the attempts by the staff member to assist the student in completing the requirements.

So, in parallel to our discussion of *ex-matriculated* above, we would argue that the term ‘declaration of sufficient means’ has in this encounter been ratified as a legitimate lexical item by the participants and a shared understanding of its meaning has been negotiated. In this way, the interaction that takes place in this face-to-face encounter – uneventful as it may seem – could be perceived as a potentially important step in the gradual emergence of this phrase as a generally accepted and commonly employed bureaucratic term in the linguistic repertoire of the international university in Denmark.

Discussion

In this chapter, we have presented a number of illustrative examples from service encounters at a Danish university that demonstrate how speakers negotiate ‘local’ bureaucratic terms and their meaning, and thereby contribute to the hyper-local emergent register of English. Obviously, we do not wish to make sweeping claims about linguistic change on the basis of the analyses we have carried out. However, we would like to suggest that what we have presented amounts to a study of the kind of social processes that necessarily underlie – and which are therefore likely to facilitate the on-going process of – linguistic change. Social interaction in face-to-face encounters may be considered the primordial site of language variation and change, and by studying such sites in detail, we may be able to catch a glimpse of – and hopefully describe in some detail – some of the multiple factors that relate to what Weinreich, Labov and Herzog (1968) call ‘the actuation riddle’, i.e. the problem of explaining why and how linguistic change actually comes about. By focusing on lexical items, we have arguably been studying one of the less obscure elements of the riddle, since changes at other linguistic levels are less likely to become the object of metalinguistic discourse of the kind we have studied here. Yet, if we assume that the processes driving linguistic change are to some extent parallel or at least similar irrespective of the (analytically determined) level of language we investigate, the study of processes related to lexical innovation and change may have a bearing on our understanding of changes at other levels.

In our view, the use of language in transient multilingual communities constitutes a particularly interesting site of investigation for research that takes an interest in the link between social and linguistic change, since many of the changes that we only have access to ‘after the fact’ in traditional stable communities are often unfolding in real time in transient communities. By studying social interaction in transient multilingual communities, we may not be able to describe or predict the formation of particular linguistic varieties (because the use of language may never result in sedimented patterns that we might want to describe as varieties), but we are ideally

positioned to study the processes that may be said to underlie linguistic change, in stable as well as transient communities.

Today, English is used as a lingua franca ‘locally everywhere’ as Latour (2005) might have put it. Under these conditions, English can either be conceptualized as an ‘immutable mobile’ Latour (1987), an object that can be transported across social borders and between intersecting social worlds while remaining stable, or as a ‘boundary object’. In Star & Griesemer’s description (1989) boundary objects are:

... objects which are both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites. They are weakly structured in common use, and become strongly structured in individual-site use. They may be abstract or concrete. They have different meanings in different social worlds but their structure is common enough to more than one world to make them recognizable, a means of translation. The creation and management of boundary objects is key in developing and maintaining coherence across intersecting social worlds. (Star & Griesemer 1989: 393)

Where we see an orientation to correcting slight ‘imperfections’ in language use (Example 1) and L1 speakers of English being oriented to as having greater epistemic authority in producing candidate terms as well as confirming or disconfirming linguistic forms (Examples 1 and 2), it appears that the language is being conceptualised by participants as a fully formed set of linguistic resources that can be transported to and applied across local settings internationally. It is treated as a language that can stand in for local terms in other languages, regardless of the way the local terms are bound up with e.g. local practices, institutions and concepts. However, with those present not always being representative of groups traditionally afforded primary epistemic rights for adjudicating on language matters – i.e. L1 speakers or language teachers – others may assume this position, acting as language experts within particular areas of knowledge. This is what we see in Example 3 and, very clearly, in Example 4. In these cases, the language is treated as being more closely bound up with local practices, and in this way it could be said to possess a level of plasticity that affords users opportunities for structuring the linguistic resources more strongly in their individual-site use (cf. the terminology of Star & Griesemer).

The metaphor pursued here may also be applied at the level of individual words. In instances where we see candidate terms emerging from the demands of the local setting in this way, we might describe these as ‘intermediary objects’ (Brassac et al. 2008; Jeantet 1998; Vinck 1999). Brassac et. al. (2008: 217) describe intermediary objects as ‘virtual objects’ that are ‘yet to be manufactured’ and go on to say that,

[b]y way of these representations, actors assume they will be able to communicate their idea of the problems they have to solve, the possible solutions, and the constraints to be taken into account. Intermediary objects mediate the way each specialist expresses himself or herself and the setting up of a compromise. When the object is robust enough to support interactions between various social worlds, they can be called boundary objects (Star & Griesemer, 1989). (Brassac et al. 2008: 217).

Terms such as those observed in our data, ‘*ex-matriculated*’ and ‘*declaration of sufficient means*’, could be representative of the different stages of this process, from intermediary objects to boundary objects, i.e. terms that gradually assume a level of usability in their own right and can be deployed across different contexts within the local settings. No matter whether the terms eventually come to be adopted and ratified as English terms ‘proper’, for instance through inclusion in dictionaries, or not, the cases illustrate how English is constantly changing in response to its use in increasingly more diversified local settings.

Concluding remarks

In writing this chapter, we hope to have illustrated one way in which it might be possible to pursue what we consider a desirable cross-fertilization between the general research area of sociolinguistics, particularly the study of language variation and change, and the emerging body of research on the use of language in lingua franca scenarios, particularly scenarios where English is used as the lingua franca. Considering traditional demarcations between disciplines, it might seem peculiar to enlist a CA-inspired micro-analytical approach as the methodological go-between in this process since conversation analysts and sociolinguists are not the most obvious bedfellows, but we believe that the study of transient, multilingual communities calls for new and perhaps unconventional approaches to problems that may appear familiar from the study of stable communities, but which are nevertheless not quite the same in transient communities, and it is in that spirit that we have offered this chapter.

References

- Brassac, Christian, Pierre Fixmer, Lorenza Mondada & Dominique Vinck. 2008. Interweaving objects, gestures, and talk in context. *Mind, Culture, and Activity* 15(3). 208–233.
- Cogo, Alessia. 2008. English as a lingua franca: Form follows function. *English Today* 24(3). doi:10.1017/S0266078408000308.
- Day, Dennis & Susanne Kjørbeck. 2012. Treating student contributions as displays of understanding in group supervision. In Gitte Rasmussen & Catherine E. Brouwer (eds.), *Evaluating Cognitive Competences in Interaction*, 67–88. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Fabricius, Anne, Janus Mortensen, Hartmut Haberland. 2016. The lure of internationalization: Paradoxical discourses of transnational student mobility, linguistic diversity and cross-cultural exchange. *Higher Education*. Online ahead of print. doi:10.1007/s10734-015-9978-3.
- Firth, Alan. 1996. The discursive accomplishment of normality: On conversation analysis and “lingua franca” English. *Journal of Pragmatics* 26. 237–259.
- Firth, Alan & Johannes Wagner. 1997. On discourse, communication, and (some) fundamental concepts in SLA research. *The Modern Language Journal* 81(3). 285–300. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.1997.tb05480.x.
- Firth, Alan & Johannes Wagner. 2007. Second/foreign language learning as a social accomplishment: Elaborations on a reconceptualized SLA. *The Modern Language Journal* 91. 800–819. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.2007.00670.x.
- Gafaranga, Joseph, and Maria.-Carme. Torras. 2001. Language versus medium in the study of bilingual conversation. *International Journal of Bilingualism* 5(2): 195–219. doi:10.1177/13670069010050020401.
- Haberland, Hartmut & Janus Mortensen. 2012. Language variety, language hierarchy and language choice in the international university. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* (216). 1–6. doi:10.1515/ijsl-2012-0036.
- Hayano, Kaoru. 2011. Claiming epistemic primacy: Yo-marked assessments in Japanese. In Tanya Stivers, Lorenza Mondada & Jakob Steensig (eds.), *The Morality of Knowledge in Conversation*, 58–81. Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511921674.004.
- Hazel, Spencer. 2012. Interactional competence in the institutional setting of the international university: Talk and embodied action as multimodal aggregates in institutional interaction. PhD Thesis, Roskilde: Roskilde University.
- Hazel, Spencer. 2015. The Paradox from Within – Research Participants Doing-Being-Observed. *Qualitative Research*, Online First. doi:10.1177/1468794115596216
- Hazel, Spencer & Janus Mortensen. 2012. Kitchen talk: Exploring linguistic practices in liminal institutional interactions in a multilingual university setting. In Hartmut Haberland, Dorte Lønsmann & Bent Preisler (eds.), *Language Alternation, Language Choice and Language Encounter in International Education*, 3–30. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Hazel, Spencer & Johannes Wagner. 2015. L2 and L3 integrated learning: Lingua franca use in learning an additional language in the classroom. In Christopher Joseph Jenks & Paul Seedhouse (eds.), *International Perspectives on ELT Classroom Interaction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Heritage, John. 2012. The epistemic engine: Sequence Organization and territories of knowledge. *Research on Language & Social Interaction* 45(1). 30–52. doi:10.1080/08351813.2012.646685.
- Heritage, John & Geoffrey Raymond. 2005. The terms of agreement: Indexing epistemic authority and subordination in talk-in-interaction. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 68(1). 15–38. doi:10.1177/019027250506800103.
- Hynninen, Niina. 2013. *Language Regulation in English as a Lingua Franca: Exploring Language-regulatory practices in academic spoken discourse*. PhD Thesis, Helsinki: University of Helsinki. <https://helda.helsinki.fi/handle/10138/38290>.
- Jeantet, Alain. 1998. Les objets intermédiaires dans les processus de conception des produits. *Sociologie du travail* 3(98). 291–316.
- Jefferson, Gail. 1987. On exposed and embedded correction in conversation. In Graham Button & John R.E. Lee (eds.), *Talk and Social Organisation*, 86–100. Cleveland, Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters.
- Jenkins, Jennifer. 2013. *English as a Lingua Franca in the International University: The Politics of academic English language policy*. London: Routledge.

- Kirkebak, Mads Jakob. 2013. "Teacher! Why Do You Speak English?" A discussion of teacher use of english in a danish language class. In Hartmut Haberland, Dorte Lønsmann & Bent Preisler (eds.), *Language Alternation, Language Choice and Language Encounter in International Tertiary Education*, 143–159. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Latour, Bruno. 1987. *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers Through Society*. Harvard University Press.
- Latour, Bruno. 2005. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lave, Jean, and Etienne Wenger. 1991. *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- MacWhinney, Brian & Johannes Wagner. 2010. Transcribing, searching and data sharing: The CLAN software and the TalkBank data repository. *Gesprächsforschung - Online-Zeitschrift zur verbalen Interaktion* 11. 154–173.
- Mauranen, Anna. 2012. *Exploring ELF: Academic English Shaped by Non-Native Speakers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mortensen, Janus. 2010. *Epistemic Stance Marking in the Use of English as a Lingua Franca: A Comparative Study of the Pragmatic Functions of Epistemic Stance Marking in Problem-Solving Sequences at Student Project Group Meetings, with Special Emphasis on Meetings Where English is Used as a Lingua Franca*. PhD Thesis, Roskilde: Roskilde University.
- Mortensen, Janus. 2013. Notes on English used as a lingua franca as an object of study. *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca* 2(1). 25–46. doi:10.1515/jelf-2013-0002.
- Mortensen, Janus. 2014. Language policy from below: Language choice in student project groups in a multilingual university setting. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 35(4). 425–442. doi:10.1080/01434632.2013.874438.
- Nevile, Maurice & Johannes Wagner. 2008. Managing languages and participation in a multilingual group examination. In Hartmut Haberland, Janus Mortensen, Anne Fabricius, Bent Preisler, Karen Risager & Susanne Kjærbeck (eds.), *Higher Education in the Global Village*, 149–175. Roskilde: Roskilde Universitetscenter.
- Preisler, Bent, Ida Klitgård & Anne H Fabricius. 2011. *Language and Learning in the International University: From English Uniformity to Diversity and Hybridity*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Raymond, Geoffrey & John Heritage. 2006. The epistemics of social relations: Owning grandchildren. *Language in Society* 35(05). 677–705. doi:10.1017/S0047404506060325.
- Sacks, Harvey. 1984. On doing "being ordinary." In J. Maxwell Atkinson (ed.), *Structures of Social Action*, 413–429. Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511665868.024.
- Sacks, Harvey, Emanuel A. Schegloff & Gail Jefferson. 1974. A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. *Language* 50. 696–735.
- Speer, Susan A. & Ian Hutchby. 2003. From ethics to analytics: Aspects of participants' orientations to the presence and relevance of recording devices. *Sociology* 37(2). 315–337. doi:10.1177/0038038503037002006.
- Star, Susan Leigh & James R. Griesemer. 1989. Institutional ecology, "translations" and boundary objects: Amateurs and professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-39. *Social Studies of Science* 19(3). 387–420. doi:10.1177/030631289019003001.
- Vinck, Dominique. 1999. Les objets intermédiaires dans les réseaux de coopération scientifique. Contribution à la prise en compte des objets dans les dynamiques sociales. *Revue française de sociologie* 40(2). 385–414. doi:10.2307/3322770.
- Weinreich, Uriel, William Labov & Marvin I. Herzog. 1968. Empirical foundations for a theory of language change. In Winfred P. Lehmann & Yakov Malkiel (eds.), *Directions for Historical Linguistics: A Symposium*, 97–105. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Transcription conventions

Draft Prepared for **Changing English - Global and Local Perspectives**

Identifier	TEA:
Pause	(0.2)
Overlap markers top	[]
Overlap markers bottom	[]
Intonation: rising	↗
continuing	→
falling	↘
Pitch shift	↑
Latched turns	≈
Smiley voice	☺
Unsure	?Unsure?
Within word laughter	h
Inbreath	· hhhh
Stress	<u>now</u>
Accelerated speech	Δand youΔ
Translation	<i>In italics</i>